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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the process of change, which includes internal affective and cognitive elements, leading to new perspectives, cognitions, and behaviors in regard to attitudes towards and relationships with others who are ethnically and culturally different from themselves. It emphasizes the necessity of lifelong development of counselor educators, as they are the role models for their students and trainees. It examines the complex change process, including how to motivate for change. It utilizes Multicultural Counseling Competencies as the standard by which to begin the discussion, and Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory of meaning-making as the framework for examining this process. The paper concludes that the change process can be exhilarating and painful. There are times of greater growth and periods of stasis, but continual attention and ongoing work is needed for counselors to internalize and actualize the embodiment of Multicultural Counseling Competencies in a genuine, authentic manner. (Contains 12 references.) (JDM)

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RELATING AUTHENTICALLY IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY: A PROCESS OF PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

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> What is needed most are affective experiences designed to humanize counselors...Few counselors ever ask what they can do to change themselves; few want to know how they can become better human beings in order to relate more effectually with other human beings who, through the accident of birth, are racially and ethnically different. (Vontress, 1976, p. 62)

More than 20 years after Vontress made this statement, we believe that its critical elements--*counselors [*and counselor educators*] being open to changing themselves via affective experiences* in order to relate more effectually with persons who are racially and ethnically different from themselves--are the key for relating genuinely and empathically in a global community. In this paper, our goal is to begin to examine the process of change, which includes internal affective and cognitive elements, leading to new perspectives, cognitions, and behaviors in regards to our attitudes toward and relationships with others who are ethnically and culturally different from ourselves. While most of the literature has focused on *counselor* competencies and counselors-in-training, we emphasize the necessary lifelong development of *counselor educators,* as they are the role models for their students and trainees.

This paper will focus on an examination of this complex and multifaceted process, including how we are motivated to be engaged in it. We will utilize the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCCs) (Arredondo & D'Andrea, 1995) as the standards by which to begin our discussion, and Robert Kegan's (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory of meaning-making as the framework for examining the process of change. This paper is written from the perspectives and experiences of two White women of middle and upper middle class backgrounds from the United States, and we look forward to discussions of this change process

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with persons from cultural and class backgrounds different from our own.

For over 20 years, much has been written about the need for counselors to become "culturally aware" and "culturally sensitive" in order to work more effectively with clients from different cultures and ethnicities. In most cases, this has meant that counselors were aware of and sensitive to the differences among various racial and ethnic groups, and specific counseling strategies and interventions that might be most effective with clients from a certain group. The profession's focus was on the counselor's--and especially white counselors--"knowledge of" and "sensitivity to" the *differences of the others*. Little attention, if any, was given to the counselor's awareness of his or her own ethnicity and cultural background, and the implicit assumptions, biases, and worldview inherent therein. And, as stated by the National Advisory Mental Health Council (as cited in Pedersen, 1997, p. 26) "the level of cultural self-awareness among counselors has been demonstrated to be low". These findings corroborate our own experiences and those of our counseling students, most of whom are White and, until their entry into a graduate counseling program, view themselves as "Americans" and with little or no sense of ethnic nor racial heritage or influence, nor of the privilege and racism--often unconscious and unintended--that pervades the dominant culture, including the counseling profession.

More recently, there has been a growing movement to specify and endorse competencies for effective multicultural counselors. The Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCCs) represent one well-articulated and defined set of standards to inform our intellectual understanding of diversity and to provide direction for training effective counselors and counselor educators. It has been recognized that a necessary, although not sufficient, first step is for counselors to have awareness of their own cultural heritage and its inherent values and biases, particularly in regards to psychological and counseling processes, and how their work as counselors with clients of different backgrounds might be affected--for better or for worse. The MCCs go beyond this initial step of self-awareness of cultural heritage and include objectives that address counselors' abilities to: "possess knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affects them personally and in their work"; "acknowledge their own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings"; and constantly seek "to understand themselves as racial and cultural beings (who are) seeking a nonracist identity." Under "Counselor Awareness of Client's Worldview, the MCC includes: "Culturally skilled counselors are aware of their negative emotional reactions toward other racial and ethnic groups that may prove detrimental to their clients in counseling." Based on our own personal experiences and observations of our students and colleagues, competencies such as the latter are much more difficult and painful to "achieve"; in fact, to us, they embody the work of a lifetime.

As written, we suggest that most, if not all, of the MCCs fall within Kegan's (1982, 1994) third order of consciousness in that they provide operational definitions for cognitive (and in a few competencies, behavioral) measurement. Kegan's third order of meaning-making describes a self that is defined by and embedded in external expectations, which, in one sense, the MCCs represent. However, our interpretation of the MCCs authors' intent or spirit behind the competencies is that, ultimately, one would be able to personally internalize--affectively and cognitively--the various awarenesses, knowledge, and understandings stated in the MCCs. We further suggest that in order to do so, one needs to be moving toward Kegan's fourth order of

consciousness. These competencies (e.g., the awareness and knowledge of one's values, assumptions, feelings, biases, etc.), at Kegan's fourth order of consciousness, would be utilized as the basis for a dialogical relationship with them; to use Kegan's terms, one would be able to view the internalized competencies as the "object" of one's own self-reflections. The outcome of this inner dialogue is a way of being that is manifested in one's deportment and interactions with others. Thus, counselor self-awareness as a cognitive objective is a prerequisite for multicultural competence; but, ultimately, to become "the better human beings" that Vontress describes in our opening quotation, we posit that one needs to develop a self-awareness that is deeply and affectively integrated into one's sense of self and that manifests itself through relationships in ways that are not easily operationally defined and quantified.

While the MCCs have been stated as goals or objectives, we view them as being actualized on a continuum that involves different levels of consciousness. Thus, we are in a continuous process of developing our competence as effective multicultural counselors. We find Kegan's constructive-developmental theory about the evolution of consciousness and meaning-making useful as a framework for describing the internal shifts and affective and cognitive changes as one moves from the third to fourth order of consciousness in terms of the MCCs. Development from one order of consciousness to another involves a very gradual qualitative, nonlinear transformation in the ways one perceives the world, constructs knowledge, and relates to relationships with others and oneself. This process paradigm is supported by Sue (1997) as he contends that "multiculturalism is truly postmodern and social constructionist in character" (p. 8). We emphasize that this process is a lifelong journey that requires continual attention and work.

In addition, Sue (1996) postulates that multiculturalism means "change" at all levels, individual, organizational, and societal levels. Change is often painful for individuals, organizations and societies. In support of this perspective on change, Corey and Corey (1993) report that to be a more actualized person, one may be able to increase cognitive awareness, but the intellectual enlightenment does not translate easily to feeling and behaving differently. Dalton (1995) further differentiates the aspects of change by stating that as we struggle to ameliorate profoundly distressed relationships that are the product of a troubled world, we often begin to change our behavior, but our attitudes, beliefs and emotions rarely catch up.

We suggest that the multifaceted development towards the fourth order of consciousness in terms of authentic and effective multicultural relationships is an especially difficult and painful process. We concur with Sue's (1997) belief that the process of increased cultural awareness brings forth images of oppression, privilege and class for individuals, organizations and societies. The more we can identify and work to eliminate our own internalized oppression--which has been a result of our own individual, cultural, and gender experiences--the freer we are to experience other people for whom they are in a truly genuine and authentic relationship. We believe that for all--perhaps most especially for those who are White and privileged--the process means "owning up to painful realities about oneself, our profession and our society. As such it may involve tension, discomfort, and must include a willingness to honestly confront and work through potentially unpleasant conflicts" (Sue, 1997, p. 9).

As we begin to experience painful realities and unpleasant conflicts, the question of "why would anyone who is part of the dominant culture or the possessor of power in society want to change" begins to surface and must be answered. We believe that the answer(s) to this question lie beyond reasons of naive altruism and liberal intentions. For, ultimately, even those of the privileged groups experience, consciously or not, their own internalized oppression, which, as we stated earlier, prevents us from engaging in truly genuine relationships. Our own internalized oppression is linked to global oppression, and, as stated by Mandella (1994): *the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and marrow-mindedness. I am truly not free if I am taking away someone else's freedom. Just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity (p. 544).* Further, in support of the position that the oppressors are also oppressed and must be liberated, Freire (1993) states that as the oppressors violate the rights of others, they become dehumanized and void of genuine love and caring for humankind, and as the oppressed fight to be free, they begin to spark humanism in the oppressors: "*It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. The latter as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves* (p.38).

While the above discussion focuses on our personal and internal motivations, there are also external demands that can function to motivate us to engage in this process of change. Even as early as 1949, Ouspensky referred to this type of change as necessary for the survival of humanity. We now live in an increasingly complex world with geographical distance and isolation no longer barriers, and there is an increased external demand to become more responsible global citizens. In addition, for those in the field of counseling, this is a professional demand--as evidenced by the Multicultural Counseling Competencies, for instance--that can serve as an external motivation for changing the way we view ourselves and others in order to be effective multicultural counselors.

Let us now return to a more detailed discussion of the process of change in terms of transforming ourselves from the third to the fourth orders of consciousness (meaning-making) in regards to our functioning as effective multicultural counselors and counselor educators. The process involves gradual shifts in the way we perceive and make meaning of ourselves and our relationships to others. As we move toward functioning in the fourth order, we begin to identify and reflect upon those values, assumptions, and biases inherent in our third order sense of self (identity) and which have emanated from our ethnic and cultural heritages. This entails aspects of the process of change articulated by Ouspensky (1948), a process involving the discovery of meaning and values and how they impact our identity as a person. Rather than being embedded in our cultural identity and defined by its beliefs and values, we can view them as "objects" that we can now consciously decide to retain or not. Thus, we begin to have values about our values, and relationships to our relationships. Particularly in regards to attitudes, assumptions, and behaviors involving persons from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, this shift in awareness and perspective can be quite painful, and a "retreat" to our third order sense of identity can seem comforting. In a sense, while shedding the personas of our third order way of being and the safety of our cultural embeddedness, we are beginning a self-directed journey with personal responsibility for ourselves and a nucleus or soul that can feel alarmingly alone. The impulse to return to or maintain our third order self or identity--with characteristics of values, morals and ethics based on group, family and cultural imperatives, norms, and assumptions of others--can be exceedingly strong. However, to retreat into the third order of consciousness is to hinder the process of becoming our authentic selves. The "work" of transforming ourselves toward the fourth order of consciousness is to tolerate the ambiguity of the isolated self while examining previously held assumptions and integrating only those that we choose to retain. We can even begin to appreciate the ambiguity as we reflect upon who we are and who we wish to become. This is the "inner dialogue", (which we mentioned earlier in this paper), wherein we think about how we think about beliefs and values we hold about who we are in the global community. As we continue this internal dialogue, we amass conscious energy about our willfulness to develop a whole, integrated authentic self and a vision of ourselves in the global community.

According to Kegan (1982), this dialogue within and about oneself is the basis for the transformation from the third to the fourth level of consciousness and involves three "functions": confirmation, contradiction, and continuity. The process of making and integrating new meaning at the fourth order of consciousness involves confirming what attributes and self-defining characteristics will continue to serve oneself at the fourth level, what resistances emerge that interfere with self-authorship, and what ideals energize and nourish the self at the fourth level. We believe Kegan's process is analogous to a process described by Gurdjieff (as cited in Nicoll, 1996) as a "Law of Three" wherein what we confirm opposes our contradictions and what results is the continuity or reintegration of ourselves. Similarly, Freire (1993) stated that a dialogue (process) must include reflection and action. While reflection (confirmation) and action (continuity) appear to be dichotomous, they in fact create a dissonance (contradiction) that provokes reflection and then activism (continuity). While Gurdjieff applied his theory to cognition and Freire to educating about oppression, their outcomes seem analogous to Kegan's three functions (confirmation, contradiction, and continuity). Ultimately, the outcome is a reintegration, which allows us to engage in self-authorship and no longer look to others to define ourselves. Only then can we accept each other, as the more we truly know ourselves and the

more we can see the relationship we have with ourselves, the more we can value ourselves from a fourth order perspective, and the more we can value others in the same way, even when they are different from ourselves.

This self-directed journey can be best accomplished with the support of teachers and mentors, among others, but the work itself must be done alone. While the change process can be exhilarating, it can also be painful. As we have discovered through our own experiences and the observations of and self-disclosures of our counseling students, there are times of greater growth and periods of stasis. Continual attention and ongoing work is needed for us to internalize and actualize our embodiment of the MCCs in a genuine, authentic manner.

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